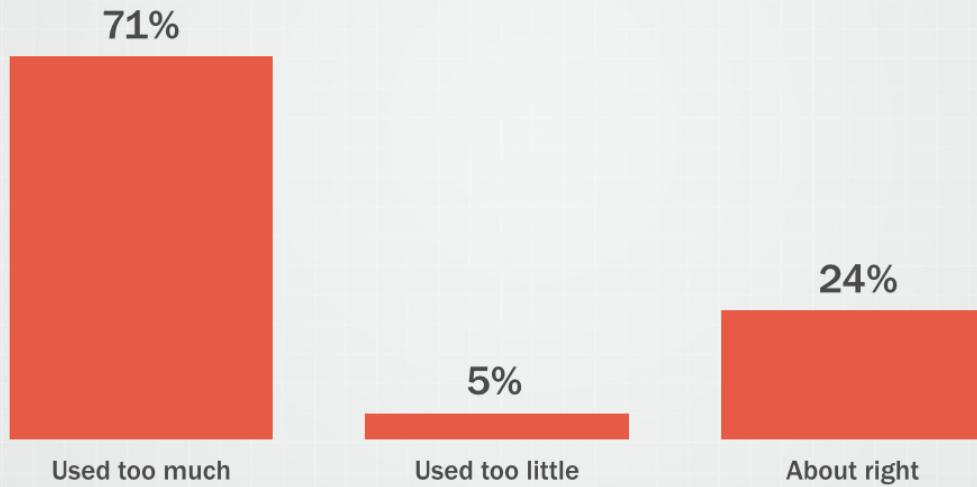


“INSIDE” INTELLIGENCE

*The Texas Weekly/Texas Tribune insider poll
for the week of 16 October 2015*

INSIDE INTELLIGENCE

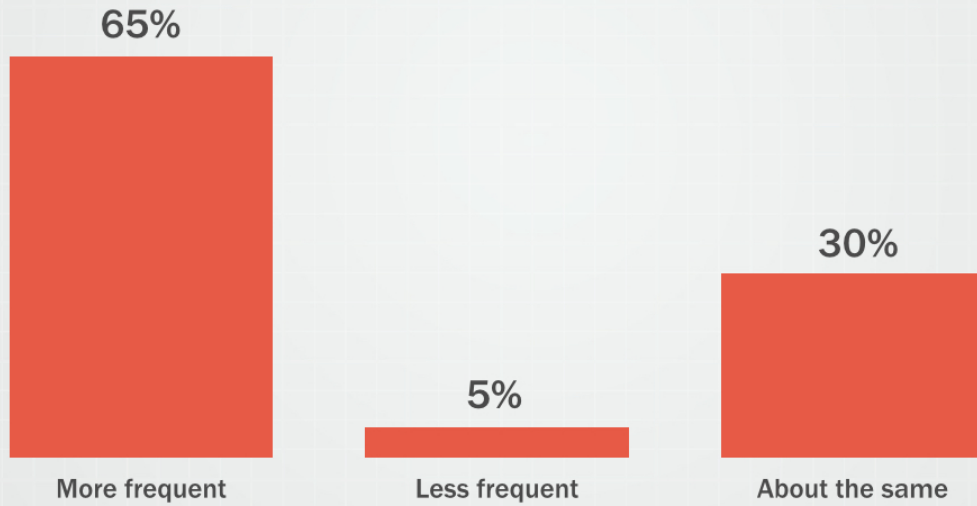
YOUR TAKE ON LAWMAKERS' USE OF GOD & RELIGION
IN THE 84TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION?



Inside Intelligence is an informal survey of political and government insiders in Texas and is not meant to measure public opinion.

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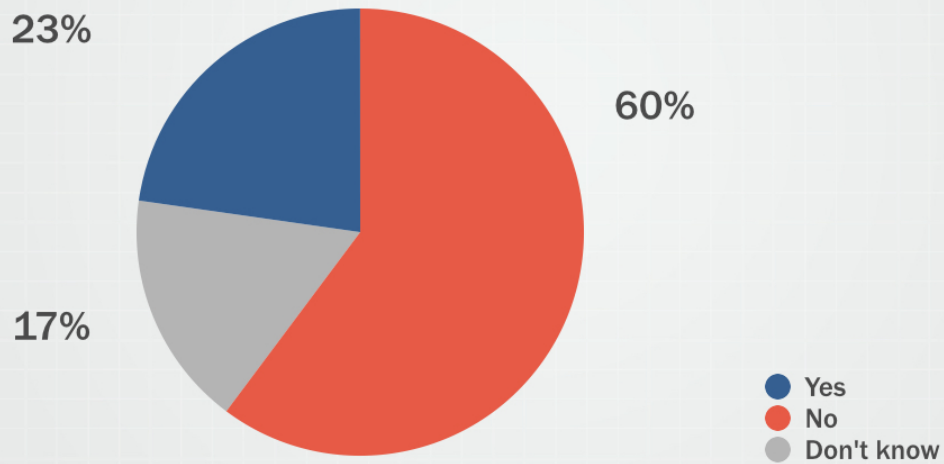
HOW DID MENTIONS OF GOD & RELIGION
COMPARE TO SESSIONS PAST?



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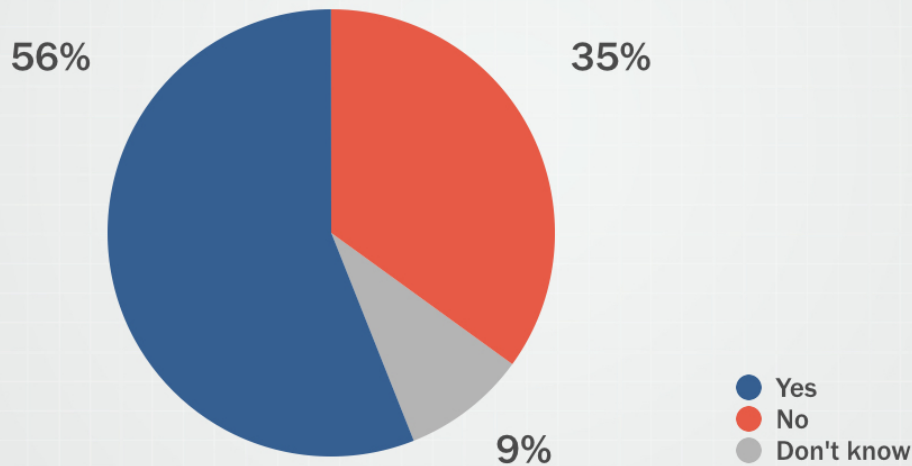
COULD A NON-CHRISTIAN WIN
A STATEWIDE ELECTION?



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WILL SEPARATION OF CHURCH & STATE BECOME AN ISSUE IN 2016 ELECTIONS?



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What's your take on lawmakers' use of God and religion during public policy debate in the 84th legislative session?

- "Apparently there is no separation of church and righteous politicians."
- "All is fair in war and politics."
- "Being human, they are by definition not qualified to speak authoritatively about a higher being's motives regarding state legislation."
- "God also says we 'are all his children,' but yet Republicans conveniently forget this Bible verse. God is only used when convenient. #Sad"
- "They wanted to tout their 'Christianity', but FAILED over and over to SHOW their Christian heart by their actions!"
- "Voters elect men and women to hold to the original intent of our Founding Fathers. They were God-fearing men."
- "So when Democrats ran the state for 100+ years, they never invoked God during policy debates?"
- "As a Christian, I am not going to complain about its use."

- "Not an issue I pay attention to."
- "Your imaginary friend shouldn't dictate my public policy."
- "I think some did a lot and some none. On balance, they were representative of the current population of Texas."
- "Goldilocks. Just right. Please don't go overboard. We don't need ayatollahs running Texas."
- "When you use God to justify campus carry, you know you're reaching."
- "God and religion aren't used too much — they are misused too much."

Living a life of faith is a daunting challenge requiring much thought and prayer. Sometimes our politicians can be heard talking loudly about their faith as if the answer's clear and simple. When you consider some of the difficult challenges Texas is facing, more prayer is probably in order."

- "Regardless of how much it is, or isn't — it will reflect the make up of the Texas Legislature and the profile of the people who put them there."
- "Total grandstanding — God himself would be sickened."
- "Democrats believe in God, too."

Compared to sessions past, invocations of God and religion this session were...

- "The show horses will continue to seek attention."
- "Seemed more frequent, but it could be just louder from a small minority."
- "IN EACH debate you had people claiming they were led by GOD to whatever vote they were taking. Even a five-time married legislator claimed that GOD wanted him to preserve the sanctity of marriage — wonder how all his EX WIVES feel about that claim."
- "Voters are making their voices heard."
- "Are we talking about outside of the daily prayers in each chamber?"
- "See above"
- "The voters have spit out many of the lukewarm members of the Legislature

(Rev 3:16) and those remaining have been speaking boldly (Acts 4:31)."

- "Too broad of a question, how far back does '... sessions past...'"
- "Compared to when?"
- "If the members feel the need for supernatural guidance, let them pray in private. They are here to conduct the state's business, not attend a tent revival."
- "More frequent, more pandering, and more patently ridiculous."
- "It's always been there."
- "But with more empty"

Could a non-Christian win a statewide election in Texas?

- "Maybe, just maybe, before the end of this century."
- "One can make the case that non-Christians have been elected in the past."
- "Not in the next 10 years anyway..."
- "If he or she made an issue of being agnostic, no."
- "Not in an R primary, which is synonymous with de facto election to statewide office."
- "If s/he could sneak through the GOP primary somehow..."
- "Some may have already won. We can hear a pol's words but we truly don't know their minds and hearts."
- "No."
- "Not under the current climate."
- "Every Texan understands that we're in dire need of help to save our nation. We're not interested in those who think they can 'go it alone.'"
- "Sure, it is possible but it is not probable."
- "Not currently. Even Joe Straus has faced issues about being 'Jewish' from his own legislators and outside forces. Until more progressive thinkers decide to increase their voting patterns, it will be tough for non-Christian candidates. Have you all evaluated Perry/Abbott appointees to see if they are non-Christian? That would be interesting."
- "Not unless it was God's will."
- "Yes. And her slogan should be 'I'll defend your right to cling to your guns and religion.'"
- "Only if they lied."
- "Don't know. It all depends on how he/she presents themselves during the campaign. After all, look at the President. He won."
- "A Jew could, but that's about as far as Republicans would go. And no D can win."
- "Yes, but they would claim to be Christian."
- "Not unless he was a star athlete responsible for some major championship!"
- "I'm 50. Probably not in my lifetime."
- "Not at this time — not if they are Republican. Sad. Texas happens to have a Jewish Speaker of the House who has behaved more Christian-like than many of his detractors."
- "No — but lots of Sunday Morning Christians hold office."
- "Maybe Joe Straus"

Do you expect efforts to erase the wall of separation between church and state to come up as a campaign issue in 2016?

- "It is a great campaign issue for Republicans. Democrats have no idea how to respond."
- "Is already more of a semipermeable membrane."
- "OH these wackos LOVE claiming God, Christianity and religion. They just don't want YOUR religion."
- "That would be shadow boxing because there is no wall. The Founders intended the government to stay OUT of the business of the churches and synagogues. The First Amendment is just as relevant today as it was when it was written."
- "Can you please point to the 'wall of separation' provision in the U.S. Constitution? Aside from radical Muslims, no one is calling for the establishment of an official religion. Until that happens, this 'wall' talk is a straw man. The better question is, which part of 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or *prohibiting the free exercise thereof*...(emphasis added)' do Democrats not understand?"
- "Yes. But most of the country believes in freedom of religion. It will likely hurt those that make it an issue, except in the Bible Belt. You didn't ask about 2017 but was stunned that with all the issues Texas is facing, Patrick issued an interim study on Religious Freedom. Really?"
- "Yes, and in the President's words, we remain 'bitter, clinging to our guns and religion.'"
- "As in, 'I will protect the wall of separation between church and state.'"
- "God (little g), I hope so."
- "Bad idea!"
- "Yes, but obliquely. No one will openly admit to opposing the separation of church and state, but some will take actions that comport with having more God in the Capitol."
- "Let's review history. The wall of church and state is a myth created by liberals. The Constitution has no such words. Jefferson said it. The First Amendment states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..." The purpose was to allow for the free exercise of religion and protect it FROM government. The 'separation' lie is used to crush religious freedom. Early American settlers came fleeing England and European where they were persecuted because they didn't compromise their faith and join the established religion of the state. This mindset and attitude shape the U.S. Constitution, particularly the First Amendment. A shame Americans aren't taught truthful history just revised history. Then again the Constitution isn't taught. If it is, it's just a mere adjustable, living breathing document."

- "Not sure what this 'wall of separation' is. Those who are uncomfortable with the freedom of religious expression might think about becoming more tolerant."
- "Only if it'll help someone get elected."
- "Kooks will be Kooks... good for the Democrats... but they can't seem to find any candidates that can get their base excited..."
- "Wait, I thought it was in the Constitution."
- "Those efforts will continue to persist."

Our thanks to this week's participants: Gene Acuna, Cathie Adams, Clyde Alexander, George Allen, Jay Arnold, Charles Bailey, Andrew Biar, Allen Blakemore, Tom Blanton, Chris Britton, Raif Calvert, Lydia Camarillo, Snapper Carr, Elna Christopher, Harold Cook, Kevin Cooper, Randy Cubriel, Beth Cubriel, Denise Davis, June Deadrick, Glenn Deshields, Tom Duffy, David Dunn, Richard Dyer, Dominic Giarratani, Bruce Gibson, Kinnan Golemon, Daniel Gonzalez, Clint Hackney, Bill Hammond, Ken Hodges, Steve Holzheuser, Kathy Hutto, Deborah Ingersoll, Jason Johnson, Mark Jones, Robert Kepple, Richard Khouri, Tom Kleinworth, Dale Laine, Nick Lampson, Pete Laney, James LeBas, Luke Legate, Matt Mackowiak, Steve Minick, Bee Moorhead, Mike Moses, Todd Olsen, Nef Partida, Gardner Pate, Robert Peeler, Jerry Philips, Tom Phillips, Wayne Pierce, Richard Pineda, Allen Place, Gary Polland, Jay Propes, Ted Melina Raab, Patrick Reinhart, David Reynolds, A.J. Rodriguez, Kim Ross, Grant Ruckel, Tyler Ruud, Jason Sabo, Jim Sartwelle, Barbara Schlieff, Stan Schlueter, Robert Scott, Steve Scurlock, Christopher Shields, Nancy Sims, Ed Small, Martha Smiley, Mark Smith, Larry Soward, Dennis Speight, Colin Strother, Sherry Sylvester, Sara Tays, Trey Trainor, Vicki Truitt, David White, Darren Whitehurst, Seth Winick, Angelo Zottarelli.